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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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SUBJECT Conservatives in the Viet Minh;
Tan Dan Chu Dang

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ORIGIN

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SUPPLEMENT

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ORGANIZATION, AIMS AND PLANS

1. The Conservatives are not yet well organized and cannot yet be considered a very coherent group. Generally speaking, they are (1) wealthy persons, intellectuals, or technicians, (2) anti-French, (3) anti-Communist, and (4) pro-American. Any coherence which has been achieved up to the present time revolves around a secret organization which is provisionally entitled Tan Dan Chu Dang or New Democratic Party. This name will undoubtedly be changed later, when and if the program becomes more definite. The leading spirit of the Tan Dan Chu Dang from the intellectual and theoretical point of view is Phan Quang Thien.
2. The aim of the Tan Dan Chu Dang is ultimately to control the Vietnam Government to the practical exclusion of other elements--French, Communists, Nationalist Front, etc. For this purpose the group intends to move cautiously and avoid the mistakes of other Nationalist parties such as the Nationalist Front, which announced a program before they had the means of implementing it. The Tan Dan Chu Dang regards the Nationalist Front as incapable, corrupt and unimportant and will not cooperate with it. The Tan Dan Chu Dang is singularly free of any preconceived ideas regarding the form of government best adapted to Vietnam and the final method of gaining control of such a government.
3. The action program of the Tan Dan Chu Dang will be divided into periods of one year each. The first year--beginning after the conclusion of the forthcoming Franco-Vietnam truce (?)--will be devoted to preparation and study, particularly

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-2-

a detailed diagnosis of Indochina and its important personalities. Careful dossiers are kept on these personalities with a view to putting them to use at the proper time. A study of the forms of government of various countries will also be conducted. It is felt that for Vietnam a democratic government based roughly on that of the United States would be ideal, but it is recognized that Vietnam may not be ripe for such a government and that a period of one-party tutelage may be necessary. The government machine is being built, including the nucleus of a private secret police organization which has been actively functioning since 6 March 1946. Later, a decision will be made regarding the method of gaining control of the government--whether by election or a coup d'etat.

4. The means adopted by members of the group for building the machine and preparing for power during the first year may be divided into six parts: (1) Establish a number of business concerns which will be at the same time a good cover and a source of self-finance for political activity. (2) Issue a magazine or newspaper with the help of a staff of men of letters, propagandists, economists, etc.; this publication will deal with cultural, philosophical and economic matters, but not politics as such. It will be the organ of the "Association for the Remaking of Men", a philosophic and moral society more or less based on the teachings of Alexis Carrel and which will be one of the component parts of the Tan Dan Chu Dang. (3) DAM quang Thien will open a clinic for the treatment of mental disturbances. This will do useful work in psychiatry and at the same time provide a means of collecting information for personal dossiers. (4) Open a number of schools for specialized training in psychology, electro-physics, chemistry, etc. Again, these schools will provide training for future leaders and at the same time act as cover for other activities. (5) Employ a staff of translators to translate books of friendly countries into Annamese. One of the greatest needs of Vietnam is a more intimate understanding of current trends of thought in other countries. (6) Organize an elaborate set of statistics on personalities through the above means and through the presently-organized nucleus of the private secret police.
5. The ultimate aim of the Tan Dan Chu Dang is to "establish a government which will be friendly to the 'most powerful nation in the world', i.e. the United States, in order to secure prosperity and happiness for the people." The group recognizes that one of the principal problems will be to convince the people that the Stalinist-Communists in Indochina and elsewhere, despite their propaganda, have not in fact been working for the good of the people but only for the good of the Communists, and that they have been in fact exploiting the people in Indochina just as the French did. In order to convince the people of this, strong counter-propaganda will be necessary. For the purpose of organizing such propaganda the Tan Dan Chu Dang has been gathering a mass of facts which, slightly doctored, can be used in public propaganda and in whispering campaigns. However, the group recognizes that one of the risks of such counter-propaganda may be to drive some of the recipients into the camp of the Trotskyists (see previous report on the Trotskyist Movement in Indochina). Another hazard which the group recognizes within its own ranks is the possibility that means of a somewhat Fascist character may be required in order to counter the effects of the accomplishments to date of the Stalinist-Communists in Indochina.

IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE TAN DAN CHU DANG

6. DAM quang Thien, the most important member of the party, was born in Tonkin of a wealthy Mandarin family. He himself has a modest independent income. He attended the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Hanoi for 6 years, but prior to receiving his doctorate he was expelled - presumably because of his "anti-French activities". He has not been outside of Indochina, except for a trip to Hongkong in 1937 during which he directed the first Vietnamese cinema film ever produced; it was not a brilliant success. He is a practising psychiatrist. He has devoted

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-2-

-3-

most of the last 20 years to a study of "Human Science"; in this study he has been more or less under the influence of the writings and doctrines of the late Alexis Carrel. Thien is anti-French and anti-Communist. At one time he worked with the VNQDD - not because he thought well of them, but because of his disgust with the Communists of the Vietminh. He is the Delegate from Haiphong to the National Assembly; however, this is a position of no real importance as the National Assembly is purely a rubber stamp. He is at present in Tuyen Quang (105-14, 21-48). The Vietminh regard him as dangerous, and watch him closely. He is not outwardly active in politics but is secretly busy perfecting his program, methods, and organization. He has about 50 followers in his immediate entourage, most of them former associates and classmates at the University; they are all intellectuals. He is a clever, witty, and learned man. In addition to Annamese and French, he speaks, reads, and writes English, German, Chinese, and Japanese.

7. Second most important is PHAM Tat My. He was born in 1913 in Tonkin, of a family of very small shopkeepers. He was educated in Catholic schools in Haiphong and Hanoi, and studied journalism through correspondence courses from Paris. From 1936 to 1938 he was the most successful reporter for TIN NOI (The News), which was Hanoi's leading daily newspaper. His articles frequently dealt with the corruption of the Mandarinate and the activities of bandits. In 1937 he became manager of a large French agricultural concession in the Tonkin Delta. This concession belonged to Mr. Lapicque, who was Haiphong's richest citizen. Despite the fact that at the outset My had no knowledge of agriculture, his business acumen, general intelligence and ability to control labor were so great that he quickly made a great success of the concession, and was considered indispensable by the owner. Borrowing money from the owner of the concession, he purchased a large concession in the neighborhood for himself. He continued to manage Lapicque's concession until 1945, and at the same time made a great financial success of his own. This concession has in fact become a sort of private empire. He believes that the experience acquired in dealing with the large number of his employees - for whom he is at once employer, judge, arbitrator, doctor, banker, teacher - has taught him practical politics; and that he can apply the same methods to national politics later on. In addition to Annamese, he speaks, reads, and writes French and Chinese; he reads and writes, but does not speak, English. He has had little or no relations with the Vietminh except for making forced "voluntary" contributions to them, like other rich men.
8. Another important member of the organization is TRAN van Phan. He was born in Haiphong in 1914, of a very poor family. He received his secondary education in Haiphong and Hanoi, but left school at 20 and did not attend a university. He studied literature privately with the famous poet TAN Da. Until 1940 he continued to devote himself to literature and the writing of poetry; during this period he remained very poor. During the Japanese occupation, he became a contractor for the Japanese. He used this position not only for the purpose of making money for himself and his associates, but also for spying upon the Japanese and secretly frustrating their plans. He was very bold in stealing secret documents, cameras, and weapons from the Japanese, and turning them over to the anti-Japanese underground. At the time of the Japanese surrender, he turned over a large supply of Japanese arms to the Vietminh. He subsequently began to view with alarm the Communist tendencies of the Vietminh. He is now in Haiphong where he is extremely popular with the Vietnamese people. The Vietminh are suspicious of him. He does not read or speak English.
9. Still another important member of the Tan Dan Chu Dang is TRAN van Qui. He was born in 1912 in Tonkin of a rich family of merchants. He has never been abroad. His formal education was confined to secondary schools in Tonkin. He is self-educated in English. In the late 1930's he entered the printing business in Hanoi and became the owner of a share in LE van Tan's publishing house; LE van Tan is a rich and unscrupulous business man, of no political importance. In the

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-3-

97269

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

25X1A

-4-

autumn of 1945, Qui became the principal assistant to TRAN van Binh (see par. 12(1)) in the "Vietnam-American Friendship Association", and published the monthly magazine of this Association at the LE van Tan publishing house. His present whereabouts are unknown, but he is probably still in Hanoi.

10. There are 8 other important members of the Tan Dan Chu Dang who for the present wish their connection with the organization to remain unknown. They themselves are all well-known intellectuals or technicians. Several of them have in the past worked their way to France and Germany - by taking positions as stewards on passenger vessels, or other obscure positions. The majority of them are now moderately wealthy.

FINANCERS

11. The Tan Dan Chu Dang recognizes the necessity for having a large budget to conduct its activities. It has been amply financed in the past, and expects to continue to be so, by a number of exceedingly wealthy Vietnamese who have been outwardly more or less cooperating with the Vietminh. Most of these wealthy persons concern themselves little with politics, but have a deep distrust of Communism. The Tan Dan Chu Dang hopes, therefore, that they will continue to contribute handsomely, but that they will not attempt to control the organization politically. These wealthy donors may be divided into 2 categories: (a) "honest" contributors (b) "dishonest" contributors. The contributions of both categories are cheerfully accepted, but an attempt is made to prevent the "dishonest" contributors from acquiring any personal influence in the organization.

"HONEST" CONTRIBUTORS

12. (1) TRINH van Binh, Vice Minister of Finance in the present Vietnam Government. Aged 42. (Canton Note: Binh was previously reported as being aged 50, but it is believed that 42 is more accurate). TRINH van Binh in the autumn of 1945 became President of the Vietnam-American Friendship Association. This Association became inactive in January, 1946, after having issued 4 numbers of its monthly magazine, but it is still officially alive.
- (2) TRINH van Po, aged 39, brother of Binh, a rich Hanoi merchant.
- (3) Madame HOA Tuong, aged 42, a clever and wealthy widow. She has 2 sons who are students in Hongkong.
- (4) PHAM Duc Am, aged 28, owner of coalmines and junks, Hanoi and Haiphong.
- (5) LE Duc Pao, aged 34, banker, money-changer, and gold dealer, now in the Vietminh-controlled area of Annam.
- (6) VU hung Toan, aged 60, owner of 4 tanneries.
- (7) NGUYEN son Ha, aged 45, owner of the Anchor Paint Company, Hanoi.

"DISHONEST" CONTRIBUTORS

13. (1) PHAM le Bong, aged 50, formerly a protege of General Catroux. A very wealthy and unscrupulous merchant; his good behaviour is now being vouchsafed by the brothers TRINH van Binh and TRINH van Po, who are granting him provisional protection. Now in Cao Bang (106-16, 22-39).
- (2) PHAM Ta, aged 51. When General Decoux was in office he was head of the Youth Movement sponsored by the French. In this connection, he was editor of the magazine Jeunesse et Sports, for which he received large stocks of paper at the control-price; he sold the major part of this paper in the black market at a handsome personal profit. He also ran a hostel for the Youth Movement, and profited similarly on stocks of rice received at the official price. He has little interest in politics. He possesses considerable information and dossiers regarding the French.
- (3) PHUNG huy Cuong, aged 39, owner of the Gecko Paint Factory, Hanoi.
- (4) LE van Tan (see paragraph 9).

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-4-